

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
FACULTY SENATE MEETING

- MINUTES: September 12, 1979 -

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Attachments:

1. Faculty Senate Attendance p. 6

Office of the Secretary
September 21, 1979

Peter W. Becker
Peter W. Becker
Secretary

I. Approval of Minutes

The Faculty Senate meeting was called to order by Chairman Charles W. Coolidge. The minutes of the July 11th meeting were approved as distributed.

II. Reports of Officers

A. Provost Francis T. Borkowski

Provost Borkowski announced that the University will shortly begin the arduous but important task of self-study and accreditation by the Southern Association. He hoped that the document emanating from the process will become part of a continual planning process, influencing the eventual course of the university in the next decade.

He was pleased that two distinguished members of the faculty, Professors William H. Wesson and Alfred G. Smith, will supervise the study. He asked Dr. Wesson, chairman of the accreditation and self-study team, to give the Senate more detailed information about it, and informed the Senate that it will receive periodically updated reports on the progress of the self-study.

Dr. Wesson indicated that he expected the university to be engaged in the self-study from September 1979 to March 1981. He explained that participation in an institutional self-study program is required periodically by all member institutions of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This is the process by which accreditation is reaffirmed. While it is a major undertaking, it is very likely also the most important work in which the faculty as a collective body will be involved during the next two years.

He requested that anyone appointed to a committee or to similar other duties accept his assignment and give it his best effort and thought. The composition of the major committees will be announced shortly.

Dr. Wesson concluded his remarks by saying that he and Dr. Smith, who had gracefully accepted a draft to come out of his retirement after 41 years of service on the USC faculty, will soon open a self-study office in Faculty House and that a secretary will be on duty there during normal working hours.

Chairman Coolidge announced that Professor B. Theodore Cole, Biology, and Professor Charles Weasmer, Government and International Studies, have been appointed to the Steering Committee. Dr. Weasmer will also serve as parliamentarian for the chair. Professor Donald T. Siebert, English, has been appointed to the Student Supreme Court. The

chair also announced that it has asked the Faculty Advisory Committee to look speedily into the state grievance process and the relationship between the faculty grievance system and the state grievance system. He invited anyone with information or questions to contact the Faculty Advisory Committee.

III. Reports of Committees

A. Steering Committee, Professor Robert L. Felix:

Professor Felix announced the need to fill two vacancies -- the office of Secretary of the Faculty and the two-year unexpired term of Professor Coolidge on the Faculty Advisory Committee. The Steering Committee nominated Professors Peter Becker, History, and Richard W. Furst, Business Administration, respectively, for these positions.

Chairman Coolidge asked if there were any further nominations and indicated that nominations would remain open until the end of the meeting.

B. Grade Change Committee, Professor B. Theodore Cole:

On behalf of the Grade Change Committee, Professor Cole moved for approval of the committee's recommendations (Agenda, pp. 1-9). The recommendations were approved.

C. Curricula and Courses Committee, Professor Henry Price:

Professor Price informed the Senate that the committee is in the process of developing a brief but complete procedural manual for the proper presentation of materials to the committee. The committee expects it to be distributed shortly to all deans and department heads. Professor Gerda Jordan, Foreign Languages, has been elected vice-chairman.

On behalf of the committee, Professor Price moved the adoption of the committee's recommendations. All three sections were approved.

D. Faculty Advisory Committee, Professor Perry Ashley:

Professor Ashley mentioned that at the July Senate meeting the revised Code of Student Academic Responsibilities was referred to the Faculty Advisory Committee for further study and review. Questions were raised about the use of student courts instead of faculty committees as part of the appeals process and about the fact that most penalties had been set out as part of the appeals process. For this reason the Faculty Advisory Committee has asked the Student Academic Responsibility Committee to revise the document. The Faculty Advisory Committee will submit a revised document to the Senate at a later date. Chairman Coolidge ruled that a motion to such effect would have to be made under Unfinished Business.

E. Admissions Committee, Professor Susie VanHuss:

Noting that the committee had submitted its annual report (Agenda, pp. 27-29), Professor VanHuss briefly highlighted three of the four policy statements in the report and then proceeded to discuss in greater detail the proposed changes in the admission standards.

The first policy approved by the committee provided that non-degree students may not apply for retroactive admission to a degree category once they are enrolled. This has been a problem for the Admissions Office because many students who were not enrolled as degree students suddenly decided just prior to graduation that they wished to graduate and it was impossible to get their records in order in time.

The second policy concerns the admission of CCI inmates as regular degree students so that they could become eligible for financial aid and veterans benefits. The Committee felt that this was inappropriate and approved the policy statement "that CCI inmates who meet regular admission requirements will be admitted only as special students on a one-semester basis."

The third policy concerns concurrent students (high school students who wish to take a limited schedule at USC) and states: "Concurrent students may take a limited schedule of courses at USC if they are in the top one-half of their class, are either juniors or seniors in high school, have at least 900 total on the SAT, and have approval of the USC department concerned." This statement was approved after hearing from all colleges. This policy merely sets the minimum standards; a department may establish higher standards before giving approval.

The fourth policy is the complete admissions procedure document. (Agenda, pp. 12-18) The Admissions Committee has been setting the standards for admission for over a year. During its deliberations there were three guiding considerations. The first consideration is that USC is a state university and must serve the state of South Carolina. Secondly, the committee believes that we can attract students of higher ability without jeopardizing the interests of South Carolina. Thirdly, any admission policy must be fair to all.

With those considerations in mind, Professor VanHuss elaborated on the changes that were made. The first change is that students must rank in the top three-fourths of their high school class. Currently we do not have a mechanism that would eliminate the students ranked in the bottom fourth of their class. The committee recommends that admission be based on a predicted grade point average of 1.75 or higher, with stress on the "higher." Several significant factors are used in the formula to predict success: (1) SAT verbal score, (2) SAT math score, and (3) high school record or grade point average. At the present time, the University has a 350 minimum standard on SAT verbal and a 350 minimum SAT math. Very often the assertion is made that our admission requires 700 on SAT; that is inaccurate, it is 350-350. The committee felt strongly that using only the SAT score is not the best possible predictor and that adding high school records provides an extra significant dimension.

Dr. VanHuss referred to page 3 of the May 2nd minutes in which President Holderman gave some examples of why the SAT alone is not a good indicator of success.

The second factor is that the 1.75 GPR is used only for the freshman year; this formula does not predict for other years. Typically most students have lower grades in their freshman year than in their junior or senior years.

The third factor is that the 1.75 predicted GPR is a minimum, below which a student cannot be admitted. The document does contain provisions to allow the predicted GPR to float to a higher level but not to a lower level. This is particularly important in our housing shortage. This year the applicant pool is significantly larger and the average SAT score, as President Holderman stated, is rising. The floating grade point average allows the use of higher standards for early admissions and housing assignments. One of the reasons this is important is that many students who apply late to USC are the better students. Their reason for late applications is that they were turned down by schools with much higher admissions standards. These students would have better SAT scores and better predictive grade point averages than some of the weaker students who applied early.

The fourth factor is that the committee realized that by using a predicted GPR in some isolated instances students with lower SAT scores might be admitted depending on the class size and how high they ranked in class. But in the large majority of cases it is believed that the quality of the student body admitted at the freshman level can be improved.

Chairman Coolidge stated that as the admission policy is a matter of considerable substance, definitive action would be postponed until the October meeting. Discussion was permitted on the admissions procedures.

Dr. VanHuss introduced Leonard Ramist, a statistician, who is Associate Program Director with the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. She asked Mr. Ramist how many universities use only a minimum SAT score and how many use a predicted GPR score for admission?

Mr. Ramist answered he did not know of any college that has a minimum SAT score as a rock bottom minimum requirement for entry. The Princeton College Board has published guidelines for the good use of test scores. Although the SAT is a good predictor, it is a misuse of test scores to have them solely as a minimum requirement for admission. As good as SAT may be, it cannot possibly be as good a predictor as a combination of SAT scores and high school record. Statistical analyses of the relationship between SAT and high school records and how well the student would do show that little more than one half predicted effect was attributable to the high school record. In the last validity study that was done, SAT scores accounted for 48% of the predicted effectiveness, high school records for 52%. Consequently any minimum SAT score in effect throws out slightly more than half the predicted effect available. The predicted grade point average based on both the SAT and the high school record is a better predictor of success. Only looking at SAT averages of the community may in effect eliminate some students and in effect the state university would not be serving the community to

any great extent. There are always a few students who do not score above a certain level yet who rank in the top 10 or 20% of their class - the doors of the state university need to remain open for those students.

Referring to one of the sheets distributed, Mr. Ramist pointed out that the higher the class rank the lower the SAT scores that would be necessary to maintain a given level of predictive grades. For students in the top ten percent of class rank it would not matter what their SAT scores were, as they would get a predicted grade point average of at least 2.03. But students ranking in the lower portion would have to obtain successively higher SAT score averages to meet any given level of predicted grades.

Following Mr. Ramist's presentation, several questions from the floor concerning technical aspects of the equations were answered by him.

There being no further discussion, Professor Coolidge asked if the secretary had a report.

V. Report of Secretary - None

VI. Unfinished Business

On behalf of the Faculty Advisory Committee, Professor Perry Ashley moved to delay action on the Code of Academic Responsibility to a future date. Motion was seconded and carried.

VII. New Business - None

VIII. Good of the Order - None

IX. Announcements - None

There being no further nominations, Professor Peter Becker was elected Secretary of the Faculty and Professor Richard Furst was elected to complete the unexpired term of Professor Coolidge.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20.